

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sargent Metal Fabricators

South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Sargent Metal Fabricators Achieves Iso 9001:2000 Certification

Client Profile:

Sargent Metal Fabricators, Inc. is an Anderson, South Carolina precision sheet metal fabricator. Founded in 1975, the company now employs 55 people at a 79,000 square foot facility. Sargent's customers include original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and corporations in the electronics, banking, telecommunications, transportation, vending, medical, and furniture industries.

Situation:

Sargent Metal Fabricators (Sargent) was losing opportunities to sell its products to large OEMs because the company was not certified under the ISO 9001 standards for quality management. Company management did not know how to go about obtaining certification. When the Anderson Economic Development Office invited Sargent's senior vice president to a seminar at Clemson University, he met a representative of the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate. After realizing that SCMEP specializes in helping manufacturers obtain ISO certification, he asked the organization to help Sargent.

Solution:

SCMEP provided expert consulting services that guided Sargent through the entire ISO 9001:2000 process, from initial gap analysis to the final registration audit. SCMEP helped company management conduct a review of every level of its operating practices and procedures, improving good systems, overhauling poor systems, and developing new systems to increase customer satisfaction. For example, Sargent replaced a "word of mouth" relay system with a repetitive system of customer order verification that ensures all staff know immediately if customers have changed the revision level of their ordered parts. All changes are addressed promptly, before the order ever hits the shop floor.

The ISO certification process took only nine months—about half the time it takes most companies this size to reach the final audit stage. The company achieved its ISO 9001:2000 certification, and is pursuing new opportunities for growth.

Results:

Achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification.

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Positioned the company for greater market penetration.

Increased sales.

Standardized processes and procedures to ensure quality.

Created 1 new job.

Reporting \$1 million in capital investment in a new facility (currently under construction).

Testimonial:

“The South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership brought experience to our certification process. We estimate it would have taken about one and a half years—not nine months—to achieve certification without SCMEP's guidance.”

Tim Hayden, Senior Vice President